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ABSTRACT

Suggestions are given for evaluation of school principals by teachers. In developing an evaluation instrument to appraise principal performance, one need not start from scratch. The Organizational Climate and Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) of Halpin and Crofts (1963) is a useful tool for pinpointing areas of strength and weakness. Four subtests of this instrument focus on principal behavior and relationships to teachers. The OCDQ is a starting point for an instrument developed to rate principals on a 5-point scale for each of 10 characteristics of the relationship with teachers. Results from either the OCDQ or another scale could be used by the principal to develop a portfolio. Some guidelines are offered for the construction of a professional portfolio by principals, both as a record of professional accomplishments and a self-evaluation tool. A portfolio is more subjective than traditional evaluation tools, but it is more authentic and has personal meaning for the developer. (SLD)

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Appraising the School Principal

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APPRAISING THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The work of the principal of the school needs evaluating by those affected by his/ her influence in the school curriculum. Why should this be done? First, principals should desire to obtain feedback on the quality of performance given. Too frequently, school leaders receive little feedback on the effectiveness of their supervision and administrative tasks and responsibilities. A school leader who is truly professional will desire to have comments pertaining to the improvement of the environment in education and the curriculum. Second, in order to improve performance, the principal needs information as to what to change in order to be a truly professional individual. Evaluation of the work of the principal might well provide this information. The principal always needs to ask the question, "Are the objectives of the school being attained by pupils in the school setting?" Third, principals need input from faculty and support personnel in order to clarify and develop meaningful roles in the school and community arenas. Role definitions may not be clear for the principal. The principal in many cases needs to modify ascribed roles so that improved objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluation procedures for learners will be an end result. Fourth, principals may desire to develop a portfolio of the total years involved in being a school leader. Evaluation results from faculty and support personnel might provide needed data for the portfolio. Personally, I find that I should have developed a portfolio of my accomplishments sooner than was done. The portfolio I have developed becomes a sense of interest and critical thought when reflecting over and about the past. Also when being considered for a distinguished alumni award, I have many materials available for a portfolio and do not need to feel frustrated that so much must be done so quickly in order to develop the necessary items. I fell all educators, as well as others, should start developing a portfolio as soon as they start their professional tasks on the entry level. Perhaps, the portfolio even needs to be begun as early as the undergraduate years of college/ university

instruction. I still have notes from each class and course that I took on the undergraduate and graduate levels of instruction. I feel a little amused when reading notes taken in different courses on the undergraduate level of instruction, in particular. However, life consists of experiences and venturing forth into the unknown. One grows, develops, and achieves as a result of interactions in the educational arena, be it in formal or informal means of education.

Lets Not Start From Scratch

In developing an evaluation instrument to appraise principal performance, one should not start from scratch. There are excellent devices which may be used as a starting point to attain a functional instrument to ascertain principal effectiveness in enhancing quality in the school curriculum.

I believe the Organizational Climate and Description Questionnaire (ODCQ) of Halpin and Crofts (1963) has a good philosophy of pinpointing areas of strengths and weaknesses of the school principal. From information received in using the OCDQ, the principal might receive excellent feedback so that improved performance may result. The OCDQ has eighth subtests, four on principal behavior and four on teacher behavior. The following, on the ODCQ, stress principal behavior:

1. aloofness refers to principal behavior which is impersonal and formal.
2. production emphasis of the principal emphasizes strict and close supervision of teachers.
3. thrust indicates principals attempting to motivate teachers and support personnel.
4. consideration emphasizes principals treating teachers as human beings having worth.

Four related categories on the OCDQ questionnaire are the following pertaining to teacher/ principal relationships:

1. disengagement in which teachers are lacking in enthusiasm for

teaching.

2. hindrance whereby teachers felt there are barriers to good teaching such as an overabundance of paperwork.
3. esprit which stresses high morale of the part of teachers.
4. intimacy whereby teachers interact freely with each other.

Certainly, the OCDQ can provide a direct basis to use in determining the quality of work performed by school administrators. Modifications and revisions of the above named instrument might also be used to evaluate the quality of work accomplished by principals.

From reading, research, and contemplation, I developed the following device for teacher rating of principals using a five point scale:

1. the principal is willing to assist with instructional problems.
2. the principal is a person who is easy to approach in school.
3. the principal has an open door policy in his/ her office for anyone needing to discuss problem areas.
4. the principal shows interest in quality teaching and learning situations.
5. the principal is willing at all times to help with discipline problems.
6. the principal has obtained needed aid service for mainstreamed pupils.
7. the principal works well with parents in the local school area.
8. the principal is effective in public relations when relating to the to the larger community.
9. the principal is highly interested in securing instructional materials to guide optimal pupil achievement.
10. the principal is open to being appraised in terms of effectiveness so that an improved curriculum will be an end result.

The above listed criteria may be placed in a questionnaire. Teachers then might respond to each item on a five point scale. The results should be shared with the school principal. The purpose of

evaluation is always to improve what is currently being done. Principals should be involved in developing measurement devices to appraise the quality of supervision and administration that is being done.

Results from the OCDQ or an informal evaluation device used to ascertain principal effectiveness in the curriculum may be used to develop a portfolio. I have the following guidelines to offer in developing a portfolio. The portfolio should be comprehensive and contain information on many facets of the principal's work and achievement. Thus a portfolio may contain information on the quality of supervision performed by a principal such as principal/ teacher conferences covering a classroom observational visit. The discussion of of the observational visit may be video taped for the portfolio. There are elementary principals, for example, who listen to pupils read orally twice a school year: The time devoted to oral reading by pupils with principal attention may be pictured, randomly, in snapshot form for the portfolio. Tape recordings or video tapes of the principals substitute teaching are also good to include. I believe that all principals, if at all possible, should at random intervals, engage in teaching of pupils. Principals who maintain the feeling of what is involved in classroom teaching should be more sensitive to the problems faced by teachers in the classroom. Additional items that may appear in the principal/s portfolio include the following:

1. pupil achievement in the local school on state mandated tests as well as on locally administered standardized tests.
2. newspaper articles on specific accomplishments of the principal's local school.
3. copies of talks given by the principal at local service clubs and organizations, as well as at state and national educational conventions.
4. articles written by the principal for the local newspaper as well as for educational journals.
5. video tapes of the principal conducting faculty meetings and being involved in staff development programs. My beliefs are that all meetings conducted by the principal should be video taped; the results

provide excellent opportunities for principals to grow and achieve in being school leaders.

6. a written form of the principal's philosophy and psychology of teaching and learning.

7. awards received by the school principal from different organizations and civic clubs.

8. plans for growth and development developed by the principal to achieve personal excellence, such as working on an advanced university degree.

9. plans for the future of the local school indicating a vision of quality in the school setting.

10. achieving and maintaining an educational environment for pupils, teachers, and support personnel which enhances life and living.

Gilman and Hassett (1995) indicate three reasons for developing a portfolio. First, there needs to be purpose for its development. A principal does not make a portfolio for the sake of doing so, but rather for a definite reason. The purpose or reason is to reveal what has been accomplished over time. The principal should begin as early as possible when involved in school administration to develop a portfolio. It would make sense to start even earlier such as when being a teacher in the public schools. However, the principal desires to show to interested persons what is and has been achieved as a school administrator. A comprehensive system of evaluation indicates that the principal needs to plan carefully that which is to become a part of a portfolio. Thus a portfolio should show knowledge, skills, and attitudes possessed by the school principal in relationship to his/ her work as a school leader. Second, a portfolio should reveal growth and interests in the area of school administration. Continuous growth toward attaining more complex objectives should be an ideal of the school leader. The principal has never arrived at being the ideal school administrator but is always moving in the direction of the ultimate. As a life long learner, he/ she is in a process of becoming, but not having arrived at the ideal in school

leadership. Perseverance and hard work is needed to move from where the school administrator is presently to where he/ she should be. Third, the portfolio should provide ample opportunities for the principal to reflect and ponder over what has transpired. By reflecting upon past endeavors and accomplishments, the principal modifies, changes, and adapts as the need arises. With reflection, the educational leader appraises what has been in the past and what should be in the future. In moving from the actual to the ideal, the principal realizes that revisions and modifications need to be made to pursue ultimate goals in school administration. A survey of recent literature pertaining to evaluation and the development of portfolios can be very valuable to teachers and administrators. Brown and Irby (1995) present a list of specific items the principal might wish to place into his/ her portfolio. These include

1. agenda of meetings conducted.
2. outlines and evaluations of staff development sessions.
3. letters of appreciation.
4. pages from a curriculum document.
5. notes on peer coaching.
6. schedules or certificates of attendance at professional meetings, conferences, or staff development sessions.
7. a proposed budget for a project.
8. a long range action plan for implementing a program of change or curriculum revision.
9. research or evaluation report.
10. letters of commendation or support from parents, colleagues, supervisors.

A portfolio should not be voluminous for the sake of being so, but rather a portfolio reports, discusses, and reveals progress on goal achievement. Many and diverse procedures may be used by the school administrator in indicating growth, attainment, and progress. Many principals also are thinking of personal career advancement when developing a portfolio. The goals of professional growth and career

advancement cannot be separated from each other. Certainly, a principal will wish to achieve as much as possible during his/ her productive years in the profession of education. Much reflection on the part of the principal occurs when reaching toward higher levels of achievement. The principal needs to ask the question, "What should I place into a portfolio that is truly relevant for interested persons who will assess the inherent contents?"

Portfolios are relatively new procedures to use in appraising the quality of the school leader. Portfolios do not present specific information as to the principals performance as a school leader such as percentile ranks, standard deviation figures, quartile ratings, nor numerical results of growth in the profession. Portfolios are much more subjective in that there are products of a principal's work that will need to be appraised by the viewer such as a principals videotaped conference with a teacher following an observational visit in the classroom. Perhaps, numerical results pertaining to tests taken are just as subjective. After all, human beings do write the test items and use item analysis to obtain appropriate validity and reliability for the test. Then too, tests lack authenticity. They are taken by individuals outside the framework of a life like situation. Generally individuals operate within a context in performing duties and tasks in society. They do not show how well anything has been done in any vocation or profession by taking a test and revealing results. Engel (1994) wrote

Authenticity can be seen as consistency in time -- between what is happening now and what is intended for the future. An action is authentic when aligned with its long time purpose -- when one can look to the future and see the connection between ends and means. In assessment, authenticity implies that the results can be trusted partly because the methods support long term purposes. Authenticity can be contrasted with expediency. The former is justified for a long term view; the latter by a short - term perceived need.

Portfolios are developed over a period of time and reveal authentic, life like vital situations and responses. The portfolio has personal meaning for the developer. The meaning is to reveal, show,

extend, and indicate progress in time and place.

In Conclusion

Principals of schools need to be appraised to determine achievement and progress in equational leadership. A variety of approaches should be used in evaluating the quality of leadership exhibited by the school principal. Commercially prepared appraisal instruments may be used. Teachers, principals, and support personnel might also devise an instrument cooperatively to appraise principal effectiveness. A review of the research literature on criteria to use in appraising the principal might provide guidelines in developing an evaluation instrument. The principal may develop a portfolio to indicate leadership and progress in curriculum and general school achievement. The results of the evaluation should be used to answer relevant questions by the principal. these questions are the following:

1. do teachers provide for individual differences in the classroom in terms of guiding each pupil to achieve optimally?
2. are there ample opportunities for teachers to participate in staff development programs?
3. do I have a plan of growth and development planned and implemented so that optimal progress as a school leader is possible?
4. are school employees concerned about the welfare of each other and of pupils in the school setting?
5. are school personnel involved in cooperative endeavors to solve problems in the school setting.
6. does the school exemplify a community of learners?
7. are goals of the school clearly stated for all to understand so that each pupil might learn as much as possible in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes?
8. Is positive communication in the school open ended with possible participation by all involved in curriculum development?
9. are we in the school setting operating from the use of an acceptable paradigm?

10. are teaching materials and aids available in school to guide each pupil in desiring to learn?

Selected References

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